Supporting Documents: For Pia Brady, Outreach and Marketing Specialist

- **The following are excerpts and articles that I believe will assist in understanding the new direction of marketing; and the approach that I apply to outreach and marketing, which encompass strategic communication and strategic marketing. The links to these references are listed for your convenience.**

- **The supporting documents are lengthy, but definitely will explain the modern approach to outreach and marketing. In an effort to make the documents less cumbersome, I highlighted sections that are particularly important in understanding the new approach to outreach and marketing, which is different from traditional approaches, due to the introduction and proliferation of new technologies in communication.**

- **I also want to point out that things like Facebook, websites, Twitter, and advertisements are all tools, they are not strategies or marketing and outreach unto themselves. They are tools that when used appropriately can aid in achieving a goal. A strategy is the plan (the direction to achieve a goal.)**

It’s time to clear up a common misconception; a logo and a brand are not interchangeable terms. In fact, they are not the same thing at all!

My mentor and brand guru, Marty Neumeier 'dispelled the myth' in his book The Brand Gap, *"A brand is not a logo, an identity or a product".* A brand, is a gut feeling, a consumers emotions about a particular company or product. The logo is a visual representation of that a company or product. However, it’s isn’t the brand itself. In contrast, a brand has a much broader definition. Your brand comprises everything that defines your company – who you are, what you do, where you want to be, and what you believe in. It’s the emotions people feel when they think of your products or services (back to Neumeier). This is far more than a creative image. And, an expertly designed logo is worthless if your brand is terrible.

http://www.starmenusa.com/blog/2011/07/14/your-logo-is-not-your-brand

Integrated marketing communications

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is an approach to brand communications where the different modes work together to create a seamless experience for the customer and are presented with a similar tone and style that reinforces the brand's core message. Its goal is to make all aspects of marketing communication such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations direct marketing, online communications and social media work together as a unified force, rather than permitting each to work in isolation, which maximizes their cost effectiveness.[1]

IMC Components

1. **The Foundation** - is based on a strategic understanding of the product and market. This includes changes in technology, buyer attitudes and behavior and anticipated moves by competitors.
2. **The Corporate Culture** - increasingly brands are seen as indivisible from the vision, capabilities, personality and culture of the corporation.
3. **The Brand Focus** - is the logo, corporate identity, tagline, style and core message of the brand.
4. **Consumer Experience** - includes the design of the product and its packaging, the product experience (for instance in a retail store) and service.
5. **Communications Tools** - includes all modes of advertising, direct marketing and online communications including social media.
6. **Promotional Tools** - trade promotions; consumer promotions; personal selling, database marketing, and customer relations

management; public relations and sponsorship programs.

7. **Integration Tools** - software that enables the tracking of customer behaviour and campaign effectiveness. This includes customer relationship management (CRM) software, web analytics, marketing automation and inbound marketing software.

Marketing mix component

The Internet has changed the way business is done in the current world. The variables of segmentation, targeting and positioning are addressed differently. The way new products and services are marketed have changed even though the aim of business in bringing economic and social values remain unchanged. Indeed, the bottom line of increasing revenue and profit are still the same. Marketing has evolved to more of connectedness, due to the new characteristics brought in by the Internet. Marketing was once seen as a one way, with firms broadcasting their offerings and value proposition. Now it is seen more and more as a conversation between marketers and customers.[2] Marketing efforts incorporate the "marketing mix". **Promotion is one element** of marketing mix. Promotional activities include advertising (by using different media), sales promotion (sales and trades promotion), and personal selling activities. It also includes Internet marketing, sponsorship marketing, direct marketing, database marketing and public relations. Integration of all these promotional tools, along with other components of marketing mix, is a way to gain an edge over a competitor.

Importance of IMC

Several shifts in the advertising and media industry have caused IMC to develop into a primary strategy for marketers:

1. From media advertising to multiple forms of communication.
2. From mass media to more specialized (niche) media, which are centered on specific target audiences.
3. From a manufacturer-dominated market to a retailer-dominated, consumer-controlled market.
4. From general-focus advertising and marketing to data-based marketing.
5. From low agency accountability to greater agency accountability, particularly in advertising.
6. From traditional compensation to performance-based compensation (increased sales or benefits to the company).
7. From limited Internet access to 24/7 Internet availability and access to goods and services.

4 P's vs. 4 C's

- **Not PRODUCT, but CONSUMER**

You have to understand what the consumers' wants and needs are. Times have changed and you can no longer sell whatever you can make. The product characteristics have to match the specifics of what someone wants to buy. And part of what the consumer is buying is the personal "buying experience."

- **Not PRICE, but COST**

Understand the consumer's cost to satisfy the want or need. The product price may be only one part of the consumer's cost structure. Often it is the cost of time to drive somewhere, the cost of conscience of what you buy, the cost of guilt for not treating the kids, the investment a consumer is willing to make to avoid risk, etc.

- **Not PLACE, but CONVENIENCE**

As above, turn the standard logic around. Think convenience of the buying experience and then relate that to a delivery mechanism. Consider all possible definitions of "convenience" as it relates to satisfying the consumer's wants and needs. Convenience may include aspects of the physical or virtual location, access ease, transaction service time, and hours of availability.

- **Not PROMOTION, but COMMUNICATION**

Communicate, many mediums working together to present a unified message with a feedback mechanism to make the communication two-way. And be sure to include an understanding of non-traditional mediums, such as word of mouth and how it can influence your position in the consumer's mind. How many ways can a customer hear (or see) the same message through the course of the day, each message reinforcing the earlier images? [4]

Accountability

Accountability in marketing is increasing a result of tight economic restraints and an ever evolving society. Companies realize that they cannot spend large amounts of money on unproductive marketing campaigns. Companies look for programs that will have a measurable impact on business at minimal cost. Marketing agencies must be able to provide companies with desired and effective results.[11]

Barriers to IMC

Despite its many benefits, Integrated Marketing Communications, or IMC, has many barriers.

In addition to the usual resistance to change and the special problems of communicating with a wide variety of target audiences, there are many other obstacles which restrict IMC. These include: Functional Silos; Stifled Creativity; Time Scale Conflicts and a lack of Management know-how.

Take functional silos. Rigid organizational structures are infested with managers who protect both their budgets and their power base.

Sadly, some organizational structures isolate communications, data, and even managers from each other. For example the PR department often doesn't report to marketing. The sales force rarely meet the advertising or sales promotion people and so on. Imagine what can happen when sales reps are not told about a new promotional offer!

And all of this can be aggravated by turf wars or internal power battles where specific managers resist having some of their decisions (and budgets) determined or even influenced by someone from another department.

Here are two difficult questions - What should a truly integrated marketing department look like? And how will it affect creativity?

It shouldn't matter whose creative idea it is, but often, it does. An advertising agency may not be so enthusiastic about developing a creative idea generated by, say, a PR or a direct marketing consultant.

IMC can restrict creativity. No more wild and wacky sales promotions unless they fit into the overall marketing communications strategy. The joy of rampant creativity may be stifled, but the creative challenge may be greater and ultimately more satisfying when operating within a tighter, integrated, creative brief.

A survey in 1995, revealed that most managers lack expertise in IMC. But its not just managers, but also agencies. There is a proliferation of single discipline agencies. There appear to be very few people who have real experience of all the marketing communications disciplines. This lack of know how is then compounded by a lack of commitment.

For now, understanding the barriers is the first step in successfully implementing IMC.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integrated_marketing_communications

Is strategic communications a competitive

weapon?

- By Eva Neumann
- **Apr 24, 2012**

The tone of business and government has changed. With limited resources, everyone's forced to strategically focus on outcomes and results. Strategic communications is a "must do" and no longer a "nice to do."

With fewer contracting opportunities, a shift towards lowest cost, technically acceptable procurements, and pressure to insource services, companies that live on government business must revisit and sharpen their message to ensure relevancy with the current political and cultural environment. They must also demonstrate cost-savings and performance metrics. To do this, messages – from proposals to the company website – must consistently and clearly communicate companies' value and differentiators.

If you listen, you'll notice it more and more. Strategic communications is the new mantra. Executives are talking about the importance of strategic communication, whether in reference to the need for transparency, improving service, recruiting employees, ensuring consolidated programs are successfully integrated or launching a new cloud solution.

Government leaders regularly blog about the success of their programs to demonstrate their contribution to the overall agency mission – partly as a result of increasing competitiveness and pressure on budgets. The Obama Administration uses social media and online communications to connect in real-time with citizens and partners worldwide. Leaders in all types of organizations now see that employee communication has evolved from a perfunctory component of corporate communication and human resource (HR) functions to one that is firmly tied to organizational strategies and business objectives. It’s no longer just about sharing information but is seen as necessary to drive employee behavior to achieve results by helping people understand how their work influences the success of the organization.

In all of these examples, the communicator has a strategic purpose – to shape the conversation to efficiently achieve results. If objectives aren’t understood and results aren’t communicated, the communicator risks attitudes and understanding being driven by a target audience’s self-informed perception versus what was actually intended.

Demonstrate value during times of change – differentiate by including a communications plan

Strategic communications doesn’t just happen. It happens because goals are set, success metrics are determined, target audiences are identified, messages are developed and appropriate communications channels are efficiently used to communicate a consistent message.

A company can demonstrate understanding of its government customers’ needs by proactively inserting integrated strategic communication as part of enterprise IT, change management, consolidation or human capital programs – as a differentiator and to acknowledge they know communication is important.

In government agencies, strategic communications planning, also known as outreach, should be part of every program requirement, before the program is launched. It’s one thing to build a website. It’s an entirely different (and ongoing) challenge to get people to visit the website consistently over time, and to have them walk away and do something. The website – a tactic – must be part of an overall strategy and plan that provides value and inspires action. One example is how the Small Business Administration (SBA.gov) can help small businesses find information on loans and grants, as well as help citizens learn how to start a business. SBA uses a variety of communications channels to target their different audiences and build awareness for the SBA's website.

Desired outcomes must be defined in advance and results, good and bad, need to be communicated. Poor performance can be corrected and solid performance can be repeated to improve overall results.

Overall, effective strategic communications, framed by a communications plan, will result in the audiences' clear understanding of the value and benefit of a change in a product, company, agency or initiative. It will methodically address, using appropriate communications channels and carefully tailored messages and sub-messages, all the constituencies you must reach to mobilize support, build acceptance and remove uncertainty.

Communications as a cost savings tool

The point about being strategic in communications is to avoid lost productivity, false starts and personal loss. Effective communications equates to a cost-benefit model and can improve the return on investment.

If you understand your customers' and stakeholders' desires and perceptions, you will understand which programs provide value to them and what needs to be modified to provide better value. Communications with stakeholders can support decisions on how to allocate and focus resources to reduce waste.

Underutilized programs can be promoted to increase utilization and duplicative programs or services can be eliminated – if people are aware of those services. If people don't know a program is available, they can't use it. Why create a program that isn't used? Remember that “if you build it, they will come” doesn’t work in baseball or in program management.

Budget pressures and a demand for efficient management means agencies are forced to do more with less, collaborate and share resources. But, people can only share resources if they’re aware of the resources that are available. If you don’t know about something, you won’t use it. Likewise, performance efficiency can be increased if workers and citizens have access to all the information they need, versus limited access to only known sources.

A variety of communications channels, such as video and social media, can actually improve the performance of traditional broadcast media and reduce the overall cost of communicating with your stakeholders. Social media in particular is cost-effective because its viral tendency will expand communications to new audiences and enhance communications to existing audiences. With our overwhelming access to personalized media channels, it is even more relevant now to communicate where your audiences are, and reduce the amount of time and resources needed to accomplish the mission.

Where do you start?

Any effective communications program includes a consistent message thread. The message must be developed after the communicator gains a solid understanding of the various internal and external stakeholder groups and an understanding of each audience’s unique fears, resistance, desires and goals. Each audience stakeholder group should have its own tailored sub-messaging.

Messaging is deployed using communications **tools** or assets such as **websites, presentations, brochures and media releases**. To strategically communicate, individuals must develop and work from a communications plan that lays out which channels are most effective to reach each audience and when they should be leveraged. The plan provides a road map that can help establish priorities and gauge performance. Planning is the difference between conducting communications activities and implementing strategic communications.

An agency CIO may develop an internal program to communicate a vision of the organization and its objectives, the implications of internal and external changes, and guidance in achieving mission results. The CIO's external communications program may provide citizens, partners and Congress with timely, accurate and complete information about the organization's achievements, policies, programs and services. It may also ensure that the organization is visible, accessible and accountable to the public it serves.

The importance of correct messaging and strategic communications cannot be underestimated. In changing environments, people have questions. Their level of understanding, trust and action will vary based on how many versions of the message they hear from different sources. Quash that threat by communicating consistently with a predetermined, honest message every time. Deploy communications without consistent messaging and a strategic plan, and risk wasted resources, missed opportunities and eventual program failure.

Marketing

Overview

A marketer's job is often misunderstood. Some people see a commercial on television and think that's the work of a marketer. Actually, that's advertising. Other people look at the purchases that customers make and chalk that up to successful marketing. Nope-that's sales. But behind every successful ad professional or salesperson is a marketer.

Broadly speaking, marketing is the strategic function between product development and sales.

So, that flashy commercial or eye-catching billboard campaign is the actually a by-product of a complicated process that takes specialized expertise and months of teamwork. Careful demographic and statistical analysis, extensive testing and surveys, supply and vendor management, and strategic thinking-not to mention a lot of collaboration with everyone from product managers to designers to supply chain personnel-all occur behind the scenes before any word is uttered on your television screen.

http://www.wetfeet.com/careers-industries/careers/marketing

Advertising is Not Marketing

2008 | Oct 15 in Home Page News , Marketing , Lead Generation

By E-Myth Business Coach,

When most people think of "marketing," they think of the glamorous, glossy world of advertising. It's a common misconception, but one that could spell doom for your business.

It's Easy to Waste Advertising Dollars

Think about all the hype surrounding Super Bowl television ads. People say that they are the best. But are they? Really?

About 100 million people watch the Super Bowl each year; it's one of the most popular American television events of the year. So let's say that your business is in the United States, and that your target market is comprised completely of US residents. If you advertised on the Super Bowl your ad would be seen by roughly a third of the US population. But the question is: how many of them are in your target market? Do the people in your target market even own a television? How many of them like sports? How many of them like football? How many of them watch the Super Bowl? How many of them actually watch the commercials during the Super Bowl? Would the cost of this ad really be worth it? How do you know?That's the trick. You have to know something about your target market before you spend a dime on advertising. Imagine that you spent $2.6 million on a Super Bowl ad (that's how much a 30-second spot cost last year), only to find out that barely 10% of your target market watches the game. If you can afford to throw that kind of money at that small of a percentage, stop reading now and start pumping that cash into the economy!

The rest of you need to do your homework first.

The Power of Marketing

The truth is, not everyone is a customer for your products or services. What your business sells may be perfect for some people, but completely inappropriate for others...and just so-so for others. In The Seven Centers of Management Attention model, Marketing is about understanding your customers. It's the research and analysis of your customers that identifies who they are, where they are and why they buy from you.

And that's the key: **you need to know your customers**. You need to know the kind of customers you want to attract to your business. You need to understand the demographics of your target market: their age, gender, occupation, income, education, marital status, location, race, ethnicity, etc. And you need to understand the psychographics of your target market: their self-perceptions, personal values, environmental perceptions, behavioral perceptions, functional needs, purchase preferences, etc.Do you know any of that about your most probable customers? If you don't, you need to find out before you spend a dime on lead generation activities.

Effective marketing depends on identifying the customers and prospective customers who will produce the best results for your business, and then focusing your marketing activities (including advertising) on them.

http://www.e-myth.com/cs/user/print/post/advertising-is-not-marketing

We’re all marketers now

Engaging customers today requires commitment from the entire company—and a redefined marketing organization.

July 2011 • Tom French, Laura LaBerge, and Paul Magill

Source: Marketing & Sales Practice

For the past decade, marketers have been adjusting to a new era of deep customer engagement. They’ve tacked on new functions, such as social-media management; altered processes to better integrate advertising campaigns online, on television, and in print; and added staff with Web expertise to manage the explosion of digital customer data. Yet in our experience, that’s not enough. To truly engage customers for whom “push” advertising is increasingly irrelevant, companies must do more outside the confines of the traditional marketing organization. At the end of the day, customers no longer separate marketing from the product—it *is* the product. They don’t separate marketing from their in-store or online experience—it *is* the experience. In the era of engagement, marketing *is* the company.

This shift presents an obvious challenge: if everyone’s responsible for marketing, who’s accountable? And what does this new reality imply for the structure and charter of the marketing organization? It’s a problem that parallels the one that emerged in the early days of the quality movement, before it became embedded in the fabric of general management. In a memorable anecdote, one of former Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca’s key hires, Hal Sperlich, arrived at the automaker in 1977 as the new vice president of product planning. His first question: “Who is in charge of quality?”

“Everybody,” a confident executive replied.

“But who do you hold responsible when there are problems in quality?” Sperlich pressed.

“Nobody.”

“Oh, shoot,” Sperlich thought. “We are in for it now.”[1]

To avoid being “in for it,” companies of all stripes must not only recognize that everyone is responsible for marketing but also impose accountability by establishing a new set of relationships between the function and the rest of the organization. In essence, companies need to become marketing vehicles, and the marketing organization itself needs to become the customer-engagement engine, responsible for establishing priorities and stimulating dialogue throughout the enterprise as it seeks to design, build, operate, and renew cutting-edge customer-engagement approaches.

As that transformation happens, the marketing organization will look different: there will be a greater distribution of existing marketing tasks to other functions; more councils and informal alliances that coordinate marketing activities across the company; deeper partnerships with external vendors, customers, and perhaps even competitors; and a bigger role for data-driven customer insights. This article provides some real-life examples of these kinds of changes. Marketing’s cutting edge is being redefined every day. While there’s no definitive map showing how companies can successfully navigate the era of engagement, we hope to help senior executives—not just marketers—start to draw one.

The evolution of engagement

More than two years ago, our colleagues David Court, Dave Elzinga, Susan Mulder, and Ole Jørgen Vetvik unveiled the results of a research effort involving 20,000 customers across five industries and three continents.[2] Their work showed how collaborative the buying process has become and how difficult it is to influence customers by relying solely on one-way, push advertising. In the words of American Express chief marketing officer John Hayes, “We went from a monologue to a dialogue. Mass media will continue to play a role. But its role has changed.”

Over the past two years, that evolution has only accelerated. More and more consumers are using digital video recorders to fast-forward through TV commercials and are consuming video content on Web sites such as YouTube and on mobile devices. Billboards alongside train lines and bus routes struggle to capture the attention of people absorbed by the screens of their smartphones. Meanwhile, today’s more empowered, critical, demanding, and price-sensitive customers are turning in ever-growing numbers to social networks, blogs, online review forums, and other channels to quench their thirst for objective advice about products and to identify brands that seem to care about forming relationships with them. Individuals even are posting their own commercials on YouTube. In short, the avenues (or touch points) customers use to interact with companies have continued to multiply. The problem for many companies is that the very things that make push marketing effective—tight, relatively centralized operational control over a well-defined set of channels and touch points—hold it back in the era of engagement. Many touch points, such as calls to customer service centers and interactions between the sales force and customers, sit outside the traditional marketing organization, which has little or no permission to reach into other business functions or units. Companies have traditionally divided responsibility for touch points among functions. But a comprehensive strategy for engaging customers across them rarely emerges and, if one does, there’s often no system for executing it or measuring its performance.

More pervasive marketing

To engage customers whenever and wherever they interact with a company—in a store; on the phone; responding to an e-mail, a blog post, or an online review—marketing must pervade the entire organization. Companies such as Starbucks and Zappos, for which superior engagement has been a critical source of competitive advantage from the beginning, already exhibit some of these traits. But these companies aren't our focus, which instead is the kinds of actions *everyone else* can take as they strive for world-class customer engagement.

The starting point is a mind-set shift around customer interaction touch points. Companies typically think of them as being "owned" by a given function: for instance, marketing owns brand management; sales owns customer relationships; merchandising or retail operations own the in-store experience. In today's marketing environment, companies will be better off if they stop viewing customer engagement as a series of discrete interactions and instead think about it as customers do: a set of related interactions that, added together, make up the customer experience. That perspective should stimulate fresh dialogue among members of the senior team about who should design the overall system of touch points to create compelling customer engagement, and who then builds, operates, and renews each touch point consistent with that overall vision. There's no need to worry about traditional functional or business unit ownership: whoever is best placed to tackle an activity should do so.

Design

Designing a great customer-engagement strategy and experience depends on understanding exactly how people interact with a company throughout their decision journey. That interaction could be with the product itself or with service, marketing, sales, public relations, or any other element of the business.

When the hotel group Starwood sought to enhance its engagement with customers, for example, the company pored through data about them and identified clear demographic groups staying at its more than 1,000 properties. In 2006, the company unveiled a specific new positioning for each part of its brand portfolio, ranging in affordability from Four Points by Sheraton to its Luxury Collection and St. Regis properties.

Each brand seeks to deliver a different customer experience, on dimensions ranging from how guests are greeted by staff to the kind of toiletries offered in rooms. Crucially, for each type of property, Starwood sought to design not only the desired experience but also how it would actually be delivered. It therefore had to decide what coordination would be necessary across functions, who would operationally control different touch points, and even what content customers wanted in the company's Web site, in loyalty program mailings, and other forms of communication.

Starwood's experience underscores the fact that, despite the growing impact of digital touch points such as social media, effective customer engagement must go beyond pure communication to include the product or service experience itself. "At the end of the day," says Virgin Atlantic Airways chief executive Steve Ridgway, "we fly exactly the same planes as everybody else. If we get our customers off the plane happy, and they go on to talk about that and get others to come and then come back again themselves—that's a huge marketing tool."

Build

Once a company designs how it will engage with customers, it needs the **organizational capabilities to deliver**: adding staff, building a social-media network infrastructure, retooling customer care operations, or altering reporting structures. Functions far removed from marketing often have important roles to play, so one or more marketing teams at the center may have to build skills in other parts of a company. A global energy company took that approach and then largely dissolved the group when those capabilities were in place.

Allocating responsibility for building touch points is increasingly important because of the degree to which Web-based engagement is requiring companies to create “broadcast” media.[3] Some have built publishing divisions to feed the ever-increasing demand for content required by company Web sites, social media, internal and external publications, multimedia sites, and coupons and other promotions. Many luxury-goods companies, for example, have built editorial teams to “socialize” their brands: they are transforming the customer relationship by producing blogs, digital magazines, and other content that can dramatically intensify both the frequency and depth of interactions.

Last year, LVMH Moët Hennessy–Louis Vuitton, for example, launched an online magazine, *NOWNESS*, that offers what the company calls “information reference” about its luxury brands. The site presents a daily multimedia story with little pure advertising and (in conjunction with LVMH’s efforts on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) seeks to deepen the engagement customers have with the company’s brands. British luxury brand Burberry has undertaken a similar venture with its Art of the Trench site. France’s Chanel has for years used its own creative and artistic directors to develop content, without any need for help from external agencies.

Content-oriented strategies like these require creative employees who can feed the customer’s ever-increasing need for timely, relevant, and compelling content across a variety of media. They also provide an opportunity for productive dialogue within companies about the role of marketing versus other functions in building critical touch points that drive engagement.

Operate and renew

For companies in industries as diverse as consumer packaged goods and financial services, digital technology has upended the engagement expectations of customers, who, for example, want one Web site to visit and a relationship seamlessly integrated across touch points. Meeting such expectations requires extraordinary operational coordination and responsiveness in activities ranging from providing on-the-ground service delivery to generating online content to staying on top of a customer care issue blowing up on YouTube.

Behind the scenes, that new reality creates a need for coordination and conflict resolution mechanisms within and across functions, as well as budget procedures that allow flexibility and rapid action should the need arise. PepsiCo, for example, has sought to provide a single point of contact for its digital-marketing efforts by creating the role of chief digital officer: an executive without line responsibility who drives the application of best practices across the beverage group's global digital efforts.

Companies also need a clear approach for monitoring touch points and renewing them as needed. At one major hotel chain, for example, a single group circumnavigates the globe acting as a "monitor and fix" SWAT team. It meets with hotel licensees, educates them about the company's customer-engagement approach and management of key touch points, demonstrates new behavior, and trains the staff in new operational processes. Given the speed of information sharing today, constant monitoring and adaptation—indeed, continuous improvement of the sort that came to the operations world long ago—is bound to infiltrate marketing and grow in importance.

The marketing organization's new look

As the chief marketing officer collaborates with the chief executive and other senior-team members to nail down a shared approach for designing, building, operating, and renewing customer touch points, he or she also will require a new kind of marketing organization. For marketing to truly become the customer-engagement engine that orchestrates the delivery of the end-to-end customer experience, it

must evolve along four
critical dimensions.

Distribute more activities

As marketing becomes more pervasive, the marketing organization will increasingly be defined by a core set of tightly held responsibilities, such as branding and agency relationships, and a set of responsibilities distributed among the functions and groups best placed to manage and use the information generated by customer interactions. Procter & Gamble, for instance, has created a group within the purchasing function to buy digital-media advertising space. The group spans geographic boundaries, reflecting the global nature of the medium, and while it sits within purchasing, it is staffed by people with marketing experience.

At companies where the marketing organization’s responsibilities will be split between core and distributed activities, CMOs will increasingly be held accountable for the performance of groups that don’t report solely to them. When CEOs ask for the marketing-org chart, they will see a complex web of solid- and dotted-line relationships showing the roles that marketing plays in designing, building, or operating touch points across the whole organization. The chart will also show where marketing activities have been embedded in other functions. One major logistics company, for example, puts marketing resources within each sales district to adapt corporate-level marketing initiatives to local circumstances. This approach mutes complaints from sales reps who feel bombarded with marketing pushes from the head office by giving them simple, customized ideas for driving sales within their regions.

More councils and partnerships

While leading companies have long used marketing councils to boost management coordination, the new marketing organization will require many more of them, with greater representation from other functions. One global financial institution, for example, has created a digital-governance council with representatives from all customer-facing business units. The company's goal was to ensure that data and analytics are shared, that customers receive the same experience regardless of channel (such as Web sites, branches, call centers, or automated teller machines), and that IT systems meet the customer's digital-engagement needs.

More robust formal and informal *external* partnerships will be critical too. Customer forums, such as the one Virgin Atlantic Airways used to create a taxi-sharing app for smartphones, are one example. More structured relationships with distribution partners also can enhance engagement. The consumer-packaged-goods company Nestlé, for example, manages its relationship with retailer Wal-Mart Stores via what it calls the Nestlé–Wal-Mart Team. This unified cross-business, cross-functional group is responsible for everything from in-store activity to promotion, logistics, innovation, and product design. As a result, Wal-Mart has a single point of contact with one of its largest suppliers, Nestlé enjoys a stronger relationship with the retailer, and, critically, both companies gain a better understanding of, and engagement with, packaged-goods consumers.

Elevate the role of customer insights

Generating rich customer insights, always central to effective marketing efforts, is more challenging and important in today's environment. Companies must listen constantly to consumers across all touch points, analyze and deduce patterns from their behavior, and respond quickly to signs of changing needs.

One implication is that the types of talent required to derive such insights will change. A premium will be placed on problem-solving and strategic-marketing skills, rather than on traditional market research capabilities such as designing surveys and commissioning focus groups. Some organizations also may need help from external partners, a pattern that's already apparent at several insurers and health care payers that have neither the time nor the budgets to build the necessary data-gathering and -analysis capabilities in-house and at scale.

The insights group's position in a company could even change. At one high-end hospitality business, for example, responsibility for generating customer insights has moved out of the marketing function entirely. The group now reports directly to the head of strategy, who uses information from it to redesign core business elements such as pricing, sales targeting, and the selection of properties for development.

More data rich and analytically intense

Reinforcing the importance of all these changes is an exponential increase in the volume of customer data and the intensity of the analysis required to process and act on it effectively. Without cross-functional collaboration and a clear delineation of roles, it will be impossible to gather, collate, gain insights from, and disseminate data that streams in from every customer interaction. The sheer volume of data is extraordinary: social-media gaming company Zynga, for example, generates five terabytes (the equivalent of about 1.5 million song files) of data on customer clicks *every day*.[4] What's more, "Marketing is going to become a much more science-driven activity," says Duncan Watts of Yahoo! Research. In the trenches, this change suggests a shift toward sophisticated data analytics similar to the revolution that has already taken place in industries such as financial services, as well as in airlines and other industries where yield management is important. Some marketing organizations are already making their moves: to send targeted e-mails to customers, retailer

Williams-Sonoma, for example, analyzes an integrated database that tracks some 60 million households on metrics including income, housing values, and number of children. These e-mails obtain response rates 10 to 18 times as high as those sent randomly.[5] Such capabilities don't necessarily have to be built in-house: many companies will enter into creative arrangements with outside parties to exchange data and run joint tests of alternative marketing tactics.

The major barrier to engagement is organizational rather than conceptual: given the growing number of touch points where customers now interact with companies, marketing often can't do what's needed all on its own. CMOs and their C-suite colleagues must collaborate intensively to adapt their organizations to the way customers now behave and, in the process, redefine the traditional marketing organization. If companies don't make the transition, they run the risk of being overtaken by competitors that have mastered the new era of engagement.

Why Marketing Is More Than Being A Creative Director

What is advertising? Wikipedia states it as follows – Advertising is a form of communication intended to persuade its viewers, readers or listeners to take some action; it usually includes the name of a product or service and how that product or service could benefit the consumer, to persuade potential customers to purchase or to consume that particular brand. Hence, the purpose of advertising is to persuade customers to buy the product or service advertised, right?

Now, what do you mean by “being a creative director”? First of all let us understand the meaning of creativity – Creativity is a mental and social process involving the discovery of new ideas or concepts, or new associations of the creative mind between existing ideas or concepts. Thus, being a creative director in advertising means trying to come up with new ideas for advertising, correct?

Think of it – can you have new ideas but still not be able to persuade customers? Of course yes! If we take the analogy of films you would understand better. Almost all critically acclaimed films are creative, but many of them just bomb at the box office without even a trace. Why? It is because just as films and advertising is more than being a creative director – you need to connect to the audience in the first place.

Other than creativity, there are other aspects which one needs to take care of. For example, if you’re creative but do not share people’s interests, the advertising would be ineffective. Hence, don’t ask: what do we want to say? Actually ask: who are the people we want to talk to and what are they interested in? Also, ads should be interesting enough to arouse interest otherwise why would anyone care to pay attention to it.

On a different note, a creative director tries to say something new that nobody has ever said through the advertisement and a scientific/strategic director tries to say something relevant to the product or service. Hence, in advertising, being a creative director is fine but not at the cost of other important factors which influence the impact that advertisement has on the public's mind.

http://www.blackcardmarketinggroup.com/pdf/MoreThanBeingCreative.pdf

Integrated Marketing: If You Knew It, You'd Do It

By Steve McKee on May 10, 2012

http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-05-10/integrated-marketing-if-you-knew-it-youd-do-it

If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it, is such a cliché that it has spawned its own cliché: If it ain’t broke, break it. Unfortunately, that’s just what many companies do unwittingly to their branding programs, playing into the hands of public enemy No. 1 in today’s marketing environment: fragmentation.

More and more television networks, radio stations, print titles, and outdoor billboards are competing for attention, and new marketing channels pop up every day, from apps to publicity stunts and beyond. The number of places we hit people with marketing messages these days is growing a lot faster than the number of eyeballs that can take them in, and as a result audiences (and attention spans) are becoming increasingly fragmented. That reduces the chance any message has of getting through.

Even sales channels are fragmenting beyond the online vs. bricks-and-mortar divide to which we’ve become somewhat accustomed. Desktop and laptop purchases are giving way to shopping via smartphone—at a time when many companies don’t even have a mobile website, to say nothing of ecommerce capabilities. Add inflation to the mix (even with 2-3 percent increases, the wonder of compounding is working against you), and fragmentation can shred what once was a healthy marketing budget.

The good news is that there is a powerful way to overcome fragmentation: integration. But don't be deceived—it's more difficult than it appears.

Integration is not simply slapping a common tagline onto all your ads, using a single color palette, or force-fitting a message that's suited for one medium into another (great television commercials rarely translate well to outdoor billboards, which in turn are very different from online banners).

Integration means communicating a consistent identity from message to message, and medium to medium, and (more importantly) delivering consistently on that identity. It requires not only the identification of a powerful, unifying strategy and compelling voice for your brand, but the discipline to roll it into every aspect of your organization—from advertising to sales, customer service to customer relationship management programs (and beyond). It's not for the faint of heart.

Sometimes my advertising firm does an exercise with our clients in which we ask them to recall the taglines of the world’s 10 biggest advertisers. Some respondents get a handful correct, but by and large everyone fails the assignment (underscoring the point that slogans aren’t the answer). But one company’s tagline participants often do recall: McDonald’s (MCD).

It’s not because of the money the fast-feeder spends—the other nine top advertisers spend as much or more. It’s because McDonald’s has maintained a singular focus since 2003—so long ago that the famous pop music heartthrob named Justin who helped launch the campaign wasn’t Bieber, but Timberlake (remember him?).

To fight off fragmentation effectively, everything you do to attract, convert, retain, and engage your customers should be integrated. If your brand isn’t woven beyond your marketing efforts into your human resource practices, your training programs, even your compensation and employee evaluation metrics, you’re leaving opportunity on the table. You’re also risking backlash, as spurned or burned customers use Facebook and Twitter to make their complaints heard. It’s vital to deliver consistent signals in everything you do.

That raises a question: If fragmentation is so damaging, and integration such a powerful counterforce, why don’t companies implement an integration strategy more often? It’s not for lack of understanding, desire, or even intent in the minds of most marketers. It’s for lack of perseverance.

Put simply, integration takes time. It’s not easy to integrate a brand into a wide suite of processes, materials, and messages that have been shepherded by different people, driven by different objectives, and brought to life in different places within the organization. Many companies simply don’t have the patience to see it through.

Beyond that, integrated branding takes time to soak into the marketplace. Consumers just don’t pay attention as much or as quickly as they used to. My firm’s research of hundreds of growth companies found that the average advertising campaign lasts approximately 2.3 years and that companies that maintain healthy growth over time tend to have longer-lasting campaigns, while those that struggle tend to change direction more frequently.

That’s exactly what’s happening in the cola wars. Coke (KO) has remained focused and consistent for years and is winning market share, while Pepsi recently fell to an embarrassing No. 3 (behind Coke and Diet Coke). As a result, PepsiCo (PEP) recently announced a significant increase in marketing spending and has spent the better part of a year in extensive research and deep introspection.

Advertising Age reports that over the past nine months a core team of Pepsi marketers “scoured the globe for inspiration, looked to the past for insights, and sought to understand what precisely made Pepsi different from Coke. There were exhaustive focus groups, in-home ethnographies, quantitative and qualitative studies, and cultural immersions in markets as diverse as Argentina, Australia, United Arab Emirates and Russia." The brain trust at Pepsi appears to be taking the correct steps to right their brand's ship, but as it does, it shouldn't neglect the need for and power of long-term integration.

Neither should you (and all the more if your budget is a bit less than what McDonald's or Pepsi spends). Find a time to gather together as many different expressions of what your company says and does in one place, then make an honest evaluation. If it doesn't all connect for you in some meaningful fashion, it won't for your customers and prospects, either.

If your strategy is weak or off the mark, you may need to do what Pepsi is doing and reexamine everything. But it may be that your problem is more a matter of execution. If so, your enemy is entropy: Everything in the universe (including your brand) tends towards disarray, and in that case your role is to be gravity. No one else is going to hold it all together.

Not so long ago, it was enough to have great strategy and a big idea. Today, even the best ideas have a hard time getting off the ground as consumers' media and purchasing options—not to mention their attention spans—grow increasingly fragmented. While perfect integration is unachievable, companies that do the best job of harmonizing all their marketing efforts have an advantage.

Continuity: Creating an Image Greater than the parts.

Jim Schakenbach *Managing Partner, SCT Group Inc.* www.sctgrp.com

Let's face it. Every industry loves its own proprietary language and the world of marketing communications is no different. Today, marketing and advertising is all about branding, but in its early days it was known as positioning and a key element in the effort to establish a marketing identity – regardless of what you call it – is something called continuity. What exactly is that? It's the strategy and process of coordinating all the elements of a marketing message to achieve a consistent, memorable, overall look and feel for a company, service, or product.

Sounds impressive, doesn't it? It's really all about making sure that everything you do as a company has a coordinated look and feel about it. Graphically, that means creating a standard logo, selecting a corporate color (or colors), a particular typeface, even a photo or illustration style. Content-wise, it means determining key points for your marketing messages that clearly, concisely, and compellingly elucidate your unique selling proposition (there's another one of those industry terms that falls in and out of fashion on a regular basis).

This is not as simple as it sounds. It requires an unfaltering, dedicated effort up and down your marketing chain to avoid going "off message". Time and time again I have seen engineering departments grab logos and typestyles and use them with haphazard abandon on everything from data sheets to PowerPoint presentations. I've seen sales people ignore mandates from the home office and routinely put out their own marketing pieces with not a shred of semblance to the carefully crafted look painstakingly created by their own marketing department. The result is always the same – a dilution of the company's identity and often a related drop in market share in response to the lack of an effective, unified marketing message. That, in turn, requires a needless squandering of precious marketing resources to reestablish the company's former brand awareness in the marketplace.

It doesn't have to be that way. A little discipline and a lot of vigilance can head off these potential image drainers and nip them in the bud before they become a real problem. By paying attention to continuity, your company can reap a multitude of benefits – heightened market visibility, enviable awareness among potential customers, and a more effective use of your marketing budget, yielding the biggest bang for your buck. Overall, a keen eye toward continuity helps you achieve levels of image and branding efficiency unavailable to practitioners of hit-or-miss marketing with little or no image consistency between messages and media. It starts with your corporate identity.

I never cease to be amazed at how casually some companies treat their identity. There's no shortage of firms that use two, three, even four versions of their logo on a regular basis, with no particular rhyme or reason. The same goes for corporate colors – often a victim of one or more employee's personal taste ("I HATE that color, I'm going to use green instead...I think it looks better…"). This dilution of image is made even easier by the proliferation of PowerPoint and other tools used by more and more employees. If this is happening to your company, I have three words of advice: STOP IT. NOW. The longer this practice is allowed to continue, the more it will cost your company. In time, money, image awareness and, ultimately, in market share.

How do you combat this insidious problem? By establishing company-wide standards and maintaining them. Issue a simple style sheet that everyone can understand and follow and then enforce it. That means establishing a corporate color (or colors), a particular typestyle (especially one that is duplicated in computer fonts) and creating a logo that works well in 4-color (the process colors used by printers to print in full color), 2-color (usually black and a particular shade of a color from the Pantone Matching System, identified by a PMS number), and black and white printing. If you create high and low resolution files in these three versions and make them available to the people most likely to need them, you will go a long way toward unifying your image out in the marketplace. And follows through in your message.

http://www.sctgrp.com/Continuity_SCT_Marketing.html

The Connection Between Marketing, Finance, and Data

I think **marketing is the new finance.** In the 1960s and 1970s [we] got interesting data, and a lot of analytic fire power focused on that data; Bob Merton and Fischer Black, the whole team of people that developed modern finance. So we saw huge gains in understanding performance in the finance industry. I think marketing is in the same place: now we're getting a lot of really good data, we have tools, we have methods, we have smart people working on it. So my view is the quants are going to move from Wall Street to Madison Avenue.

- Hal Varian, Google's chief economist.

http://managerialecon.blogspot.com/2007/10/marketing-is-new-finance_5259.html

Definitions:

Strategic Communication

Strategic Communication refers to policy-making and guidance for consistent information activity within an organization and between organizations. Equivalent business management terms are: integrated (marketing) communication, organizational communication, corporate communication, institutional communication, etc. (see paragraph on 'Commercial Application' below).

In the U.S., Strategic Communication is defined as: Focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power.[1]

Strategic communication management could be defined as the systematic planning and realization of information flow, communication, media development and image care in a long-term horizon. It conveys deliberate message(s) through the most suitable media to the designated audience(s) at the appropriate time to contribute to and achieve the desired long-term effect. Communication management is process creation. It has to bring three factors into balance: the message(s), the media channel(s) and the audience(s).[2]

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_communication

Marketing strategy is a process that can allow an organization to concentrate its limited resources on the greatest opportunities to increase sales and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.[1] Marketing strategy includes all basic and long-term activities in the field of marketing that deal with the analysis of the strategic initial situation of a company and the formulation, evaluation and selection of market-oriented strategies and therefore contribute to the goals of the company and its marketing objectives.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_marketing

What is strategic communications?

The term “strategic communications” has become popular over the last two decades. It means infusing communications efforts with an agenda and a master plan. Typically, that master plan involves promoting the brand of an organization, urging people to do specific actions, or advocating particular legislation.

It can refer to both a process, and to a specific job title.

Why strategic communications?

The field of ‘communications’ is broad, encompassing professionals who *create* news or want to *push* information to the public (public relations, public information, marketing), people who *deliver* news and media to the public (journalists, audio and video producers, public speakers, educators), and people who *study* the interplay of media and society (researchers).

Strategic communications fuses the “pushing” and the “delivering.”

According to Shayna Englin, who teaches public relations and corporate communications at Georgetown, “being strategic means communicating the best message, through the right channels, measured against well-considered organizational and communications-specific goals. It’s the difference between doing communications stuff, and doing the *right* communications stuff.”

Several factors spawned the field:

- ***New methods of outreach*** — There are now many more avenues available to reach the public than the now-crumbling empires of advertiser-sponsored newspapers, magazines, and television. For example, a scientific or arts organization might simultaneously pitch stories to journalists, write a blog for the public, and post to Facebook and Twitter.

- ***Consistency & coordination*** — There is a greater need for consistency between departments, since the public can easily Google anything online. More coordination is also needed, as the same communication channels (e.g., Facebook) are useful for education, marketing, education, advocacy, fundraising, etc, and organizations need to strike a balance between getting out important messages and also attracting readers.
- ***More professionalism*** — Also, there is a problem of amateurs running amok. Just as desktop publishing allowed anyone with a PC to make a newsletter or magazine; the Internet de-professionalized communications. The first generation of web sites in the 1990′s were created by tech departments and kids (not communications professionals), and the first generation of Tweets and blog posts were typically made by young staffers. ('Let's have the intern start our Facebook page!')

Against this ever expanding variety of media, and low barriers to entry, it was easy to waste resources or embarrass an organization. Unstrategic communication became more common. Sure you got a lot of hits, impressions or followers, but so what? Executive management wanted their communications to accomplish more concrete goals.

According to Tom Kelleher, chair of the School of Communications at the University of Hawaii, the opposite of strategic communications is "seat of the pants" communications. He says that cranking out press releases and seeking media coverage can feel productive, but without a master plan, there's a risk of misallocating effort. This is particularly a problem for junior staff or people who come from an advertising background, because they can be too focused on media impressions (e.g., how many people listened to our advertisement on the radio) instead of concrete outcomes (e.g., how many people got flu shots, or how many people learned about the melting arctic).

Depending on the nature of an organization, strategic communications can range from marketing to policy. According to Emily Tynes, Director of Communications for ACLU, and coauthor of a guidebook for nonprofits, “In the world of nonprofits, strategic communications is an orchestrated use of channels of communication to move and influence public policy or to promote an agenda. By comparison, strategic communications planning in corporations is mainly geared towards the promotion of products.”

Karen Green, manager of communication and outreach at the Renaissance Computing Institute at UNC, says it’s about having a plan, not “simply reacting and responding.” For her, it’s about “framing a discussion on topics and issues that are important to my organization in a way that gets the organization’s name out there. This in turn builds the organization’s reputation and street credibility.” As an example, with the recent explosions at the nuclear reactors in Japan, since her organization is involved in high-end computing, she promoted her organization’s director to journalists as an expert on computer modeling of the inner workings of nuclear reactors.

The importance of branding is echoed by Rena Pederson, the communications director for the National Math and Science Initiative. She says, strategic communications “includes tactical steps like branding so that the public image is a good one, positioning yourself in all materials and media outreach to maximize your impact, all with an eye to where you want to be not just this month, but next year and five years from now.”

Other definitions

Warren Mason a professor of business and communication studies at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire, says that in his course, strategic communication is about dealing with “issues that might jeopardize an organization’s very survival” and nothing to do with marketing.

To Mason, it’s about ‘Issues Management/Planning’ and is an effort to anticipate problems and crises before they occur. Mason says, “For example, with an internal audience, such as employees, this planning could include planning for a potential layoff by management or a strike by employees. As to external threats, this could be anything from a fire or explosion at a place of employment, to an oil spill improperly handled by a large oil company, or workplace violence anytime, anywhere.” These issues can be internally or externally driven, and call for planning, meticulous planning, and diplomatic follow up. “Proper media relations, both during and after these scenarios, will drive perceptions in the court of public opinion and greatly impact the organization’s image and reputation.”

Speaking of diplomacy, in diplomatic/military contexts, strategic communication is a process for delivering a unified message through public diplomatic channels, public affairs (government spokespeople) and information/psychological operations.

http://www.idea.org/blog/2011/03/16/what-is-strategic-communications/

Creating a Centralized Marketing Department

ASSOCIATIONS NOW, April 2009 , Feature

By: *Connie Paradise, CAE*

Once upon a time, one association's marketing pieces looked like they were put together by a committee. But they found a way to make a change for the better. The moral of their tale: Trust and commitment can bring you a long way.

"Let's hear what marketing thinks."

When I heard a staff member speak those words at a meeting, I knew we had turned the corner. After 18 months, our centralized marketing department had finally won the trust of the rest of the organization.

But reaching that point wasn't easy. After years of producing their own marketing materials, other departments were reluctant to relinquish control. Overcoming a "this-is-the-way-we've-always-marketed-it" mentality required a long-term plan to educate staff about the marketing process and demonstrate our new department's expertise. The plan we developed eventually won the day, but there were times I wondered what we had gotten ourselves into.

The Way We Were

A little more than five years ago, the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) had two marketing staff, but other departments were not required to use their services. More often than not, each department developed its own collateral, resulting in an indistinctive array of materials with very little tying them together. On an individual basis, many pieces were imaginative, but overall they lacked a cohesive guiding policy and design.

In addition to AIHA's main logo, various program logos had sprung up over the years. In some cases the secondary logo took the prominent spot, relegating the AIHA logo to a less obvious position. Adding to the ambiguity, more than one person often had a hand in creating a marketing piece—a kind of design by committee.

The two staff marketing specialists spent the majority of their time promoting AIHA's annual conference. They worked in collaboration with several meetings department staff, all of whom had different ideas. This blending of very different design styles created conference marketing materials that were not easily identifiable. Adding to the mix, whether through miscommunication or lack of accountability, deadlines were often missed, resulting in a situation where marketing staff were not trusted to be timely.

A New Approach

The centralized marketing process had begun a year and a half prior to my arrival at AIHA, based on a charge from the executive office. But the pace of centralization really began to increase after I arrived, when AIHA's product development and marketing teams were merged to form a new department for the purpose of having the entire product lifecycle from development to marketing under one roof.

Experience told me that, mandate or no mandate, if centralized marketing was to be successful, other departments would have to willingly participate. The question was, how could we convert the staff to believers when years of distrust and not-so-positive marketing experiences stood between us and our goal?

The timing seemed right to call on a consultant to help our group form its vision. Our hope was that this process would create unity in our new department and also help us to solve the centralized marketing dilemma.

We began by identifying the vision of the new team, stating it as simply as we could: "We promise to develop a unified, consistent message, increase efficiencies across the organization, and deliver added value to the AIHA brand."

Next came the task of identifying the strengths and challenges of the new team. I was blessed to work with individuals who possessed many strengths and talents, but looking at the team as a whole, two strengths clearly jumped to the forefront: our eagerness and commitment to make this work and the diversity of skills and talents among the group. Steven Covey says, "Strength lies in differences, not similarities," and I was counting on that. With all that knowledge before us, we conceived a two-objective plan: Provide education about the marketing process and build trust with other departments.

We faced a number of challenges, with the thorniest one being the trust concern. The association had recently undergone a major reorganization, which could have aggravated the issue. As a result, there were bound to be territorial concerns, fear of change (if not failure), and some reluctance to let go of the recent past. Design by committee and the need to demonstrate that the team had the knowledge and experience to provide the necessary services to staff presented two more hurdles. Perhaps for some staff who were used to their former relationships, the new department represented the absence of the familiar. Showing this change to be something productive and positive for everyone was the first step to success. Fortunately, the AIHA executive office encouraged a culture that pursues change and continues to do so today.

Educational Experiences

With our plan in place, we set out to provide the staff with a better understanding of the basics of what our team does. We presented the four Ps of marketing—product, price, place, and promotion—during a staff meeting. Walking the staff through this exercise served two purposes. First, it helped them to understand the factors involved in marketing products and services, demonstrating our team's knowledge and experience. Second, it was the first step in rebuilding the trust that had been lost.

The next step was to develop a set of operating procedures that outlined the step-by-step process a marketing project would follow from start to finish. Since many AIHA staff are process oriented, their comfort level was increased when they knew what to expect.

And with a clear course of action set out in advance, it was less likely that marketing staff would miss a step or a deadline. A trusted marketing partner with a long-time relationship with AIHA agreed to review the operating procedures and confirmed that they represented a well-founded process. This, too, boosted staff confidence in the marketing department, and the tightly held reins on projects soon began to loosen.

Not everything went as smoothly. As projects were turned over from individual departments to the centralized marketing staff, we continued to face the decisions-by-committee challenge. Designs wound up being a mishmash of graphic marks and formatting because too many people had a hand in them.

Other problems arose from AIHA's nature as a scientific professional society. Industrial hygienists can never have too much data to analyze, and some of the staff with whom we work had concerns that eliminating the amount of detail to which members had grown accustomed would have grave consequences. This view had been extended to promotional pieces: the more content, the better. We in the marketing department believed that less copy could be much more effective. However, sales and attendance were doing well enough with existing brochures; staff were convinced that the large amount of content was the reason for their success and were not willing to abandon much.

Over time, we negotiated the roles of the department managers. Marketing staff slowly eased them into paring down lengthy copy about the features and benefits of the programs being advertised. When conflicts arose, we settled on giving the department heads the last say on content, while marketing had the last say on design. This inclusive process went a long way toward reducing the doubts and reservations, although to this day I find that disagreements between departments and marketing tend to center around the departments' desire to add more content than necessary.

It helped us to view the staff as customers and closely mimic the operations of an outside advertising agency. We remained mindful of maintaining an inclusive process, advising department managers of final decisions. We were careful to recognize the value and knowledge that others bring to the marketing process, listening to concerns and suggestions and incorporating feedback whenever appropriate. Discussing projects in this manner allowed everyone to feel that their ideas were considered in some fashion, even if they were not always integrated.

A Virtuous Circle

Without fanfare, we saw ourselves begin to achieve our second objective, building trust. As staff became more comfortable with the inclusive process and had a clearer understanding of it, confidence in the marketing team's abilities began to rise.

One concern that had repeatedly surfaced in the beginning was missed deadlines. This prompted us to discuss our team's values and standards. The first among them was the pride that we had in the work; we told ourselves and our staff customers that missing deadlines was unacceptable. We eased fears by communicating frequently, and if there was danger of a deadline slipping by, we promised that we would work together to solve the problem. Our team members worked diligently to keep the quality of their work high, and they were committed to the goals they set. Marketing-team morale improved with the success of each campaign, and this fueled more creativity and productivity.

We placed bulletin boards with each department's finished collateral materials throughout the office as a visible reminder of the successes we shared. Marketing staff took turns announcing their latest projects in monthly staff meetings, including and thanking staff who participated in each project. We placed samples of new materials in staff mailboxes as a subtle reminder of the progress that we made.

After 18 months of fine tuning, marketing plans were developed well in advance, bugs had been worked out of the system, and communication was at an all-time high. A few staff members still had misapprehensions, but we knew that we were on the right track when we heard those magic words "let's hear what marketing thinks" more and more frequently.

Ongoing Learning

Centralizing marketing is not a process for the faint-hearted. Patience, planning, and more patience from all participants are required to create a thriving program, and you need 100 percent buy-in and support from the executive director. Our road was difficult and sometimes discouraging, but the result has been well worth the effort in greater productivity, financial savings, and message continuity. All of our collateral material now has a look and feel that is distinctly AIHA.

AIHA now has dedicated marketing staff intimately familiar with each program who use their marketing plans, budgets, and communications channels to maximize financial efficiencies. We can often combine advertising to save money and time. For example, since our members are email sensitive, complaints and opt-outs rise when we send more than a few emails a week. Combining education offerings into one monthly newsletter eased the internal pressure to publicize the many programs we offer, while members learned to anticipate when and how they will get professional development information.

Through this experience I have learned three important lessons:

Set clear expectations. In the beginning, staff members were unclear about whether participating in our centralized approach to marketing was voluntary or required. Since the change was a touchy one and the message was communicated to individuals rather than the larger staff group, I see how confusion did occur. Clearer communication and support from the top would have made the process easier.

Communicate frequently. Keep the lines of communication open no matter how difficult it may be, especially when difficulties develop. Ignoring the problem only makes matters worse. Taking a moment to send an email update can sidestep a challenge, but beware of misunderstandings with the written word. Follow the two-email rule: If you haven't worked out differences with the exchange of two emails, get up from your desk or make a phone call to work it out verbally.

Build relationships. At AIHA, relationship building was more difficult because lack of trust had to be overcome before we could even begin. Work the plan together with your team, set standards, and hold all sides accountable. Listen and consider all comments and suggestions, and don't skip the crucial step of getting buy-in as you move along.

Connie Paradise, CAE, is director of communications and product development for the American Industrial Hygiene Association

The Chief Content Officer as Content Lifeguard

By JOE PULIZZI | *Published:* JULY 13, 2011

I went to a real swim meet yesterday for the first time.

There were hundreds of adults and children there. Almost all were swimmers…some were expert swimmers while others were just swimming.

Even with all the swimmers there, the **lifeguard watched over the entire event**.

My brother-in-law was with me and said, "*I find it interesting that even though everyone here knows how to swim, there is still a lifeguard*."

Some excerpts on the Wikipedia definition of a Lifeguard includes:

8. Supervising the safety and rescue of the swimmers
9. Training in first aid and advanced safety techniques
10. Work with other parts of the emergency services function throughout the community

The Content Marketing Lifeguard

The lifeguard analogy strongly resonates with me about the need for a brand to have a Chief Content Officer.

Think of it this way. Everyone in the organization either creates or has the ability to create content (we can all swim). Everyone is at different levels of content expertise (some are good and some are not so good). So, all companies create content but that doesn't mean that we understand effective content marketing.

The Chief Content Officer is:

1. Responsible for the supervision of all (internal and external) content creators
2. Trained in advanced content marketing techniques and understands not only the customer story, but where content marketing fits in the organization
3. Works with other parts of the organization (sales, operations, customer service) to adequately and professional tell the brand story.

Whatever you call it, you need someone to fill this role in your organization. **A brand without a content lifeguard, letting each silo run amok with their own content strategies, is a dangerous game to play**. Just like having a pool that is unsupervised.

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